



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES APPROVAL PROCESS

BACKGROUND

In March 2006, the CHE Finance & Facilities Committee discussed a number of concerns about the length of time required for the approval of capital projects. The current approval process requires a significant amount of time between project planning and delivery of services. The Committee believes that if the timeframe were shortened, it would allow the institutions to reduce cost increases caused by these inherent delays. In May 2006, the Finance & Facilities Committee appointed a subcommittee to review the higher education facilities approval process.

The goal of the subcommittee was to examine ways to make the approval process more efficient. The subcommittee met four times to identify and clarify issues and to develop appropriate recommendations. The subcommittee received input and advice from Interim State Engineer Allen Carter and several institutional facilities representatives. The Commission on Higher Education approved the recommendations on August 2, 2006.

CURRENT STATUS

Since the Commission's original approval, CHE staff has worked with institutional facilities representatives, legislative staff, Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC) and Budget & Control Board (B&CB) staff to determine ways to implement the recommendations. Significant progress has been made, and the approving entities have recognized delays in the process which result in increased costs to the state.

Consequently, the Commission approved a revised set of recommendations for improving the higher education facilities approval process on November 2, 2007. CHE will continue to work all stakeholders in furthering these recommendations.

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES APPROVAL PROCESS

OVERALL OBJECTIVES: To improve State planning, streamline the State-approval process, and improve institutional planning.

- 1.) The State's Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan (CPIP) process should be made meaningful.
- 2.) Define permanent improvement projects as those with a value of greater than \$1 million. Institutions would be required to submit a quarterly report to the appropriate entities which identifies completed projects with a total cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million.
- 3.) Adopt code changes allowing institutions to conduct feasibility/planning studies up to and including design development without requiring State-level approvals to plan.
- 4.) Provide flexibility up to 20% within permanent improvement project budgets for budget increases only prior to additional approval by the required State entities. Institutions would be required to submit a quarterly report to the appropriate entities which identifies projects in which the budgets were increased using this flexibility.

Commission Approved November 2, 2007